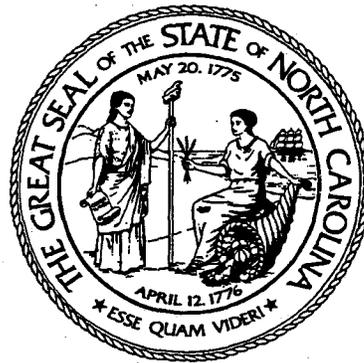


JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMISSION



REPORT TO THE
2000 SESSION OF THE
1999 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF NORTH CAROLINA

A LIMITED NUMBER OF COPIES OF THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE
FOR DISTRIBUTION THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY.

ROOMS 2126, 2226
STATE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27611
TELEPHONE: (919) 733-7778

OR

ROOM 500
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27603-5925
TELEPHONE: (919) 733-9390

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER OF TRANSMITTALi

JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMISSION MEMBERSHIPii

PREFACE1

COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS2

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....4

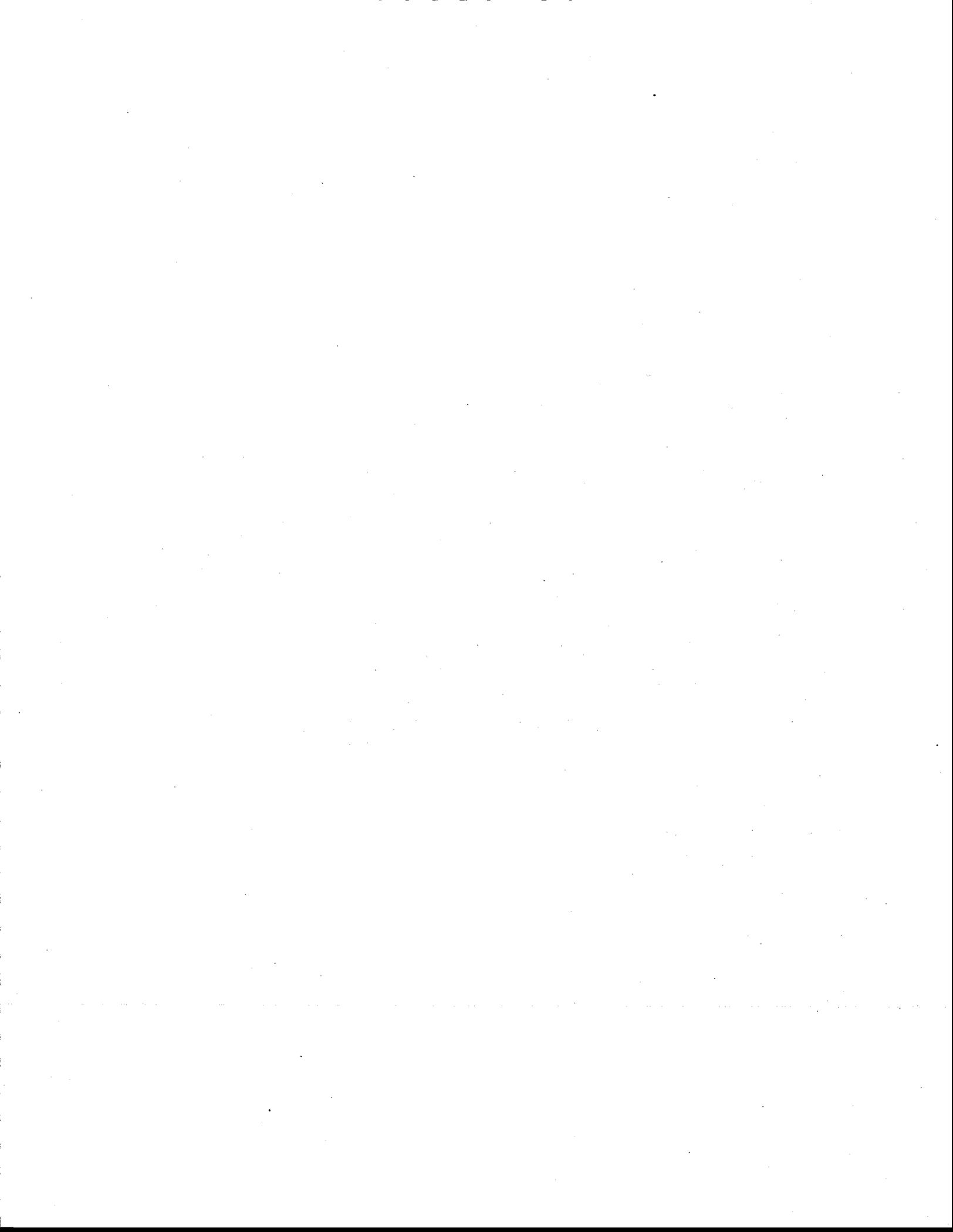
APPENDIX.....6

RELEVANT PORTIONS OF THE 1999 STUDIES BILLS, CHAPTER 395
OF THE 1999 SESSION LAWS, HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1229, AND
SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 944.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL I
Study Child Support System

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL II
Child Care Subsidy Rates

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL III
Hunger Programs Studies



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
STATE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
RALEIGH, NC 27601

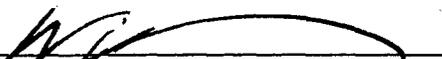


April 18, 2000

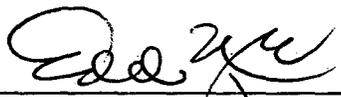
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 1999 GENERAL ASSEMBLY (REGULAR SESSION 2000):

The Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission herewith submits to you for your consideration its 2000 interim report. The report was prepared by the Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission pursuant to G.S. 120-225.

Respectfully submitted,



Senator William "Bill" Martin



Representative Edd Nye



Senator Jim Phillips

Cochairs
Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission

1999-2000

JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

MEMBERSHIP

Senator William N. "Bill" Martin, Cochair

Representative Edd Nye, Cochair

Senator Jim W. Phillips, Sr., Cochair

Representative Alma S. Adams

Senator Frank Ballance, Jr.

Representative Martha B. Alexander

Senator Charlie Dannelly

Representative Beverly M. Earle

— Senator James Forrester

Representative G. Wayne Goodwin

Senator Fletcher L. Hartsell, Jr.

Representative Robert Grady

Senator Eleanor G. Kinnaird

Representative Paul Luebke

Senator Jeanne Lucas

Representative David M. Miner

Senator William R. Purcell

Representative Richard L. Moore

Senator Allen Wellons

Representative Larry W. Womble

PREFACE

The Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission (JLPAC), established by G.S. §120-225, is charged with monitoring the implementation of welfare reform as initiated by Part XII of S.L. 1997-443. Further, JLPAC is charged with making any necessary recommendations to the General Assembly regarding any additional changes to rule or law in the area of welfare reform. JLPAC consists of 20 members, 10 members, two of whom serve as cochairs, are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 10 members, two of whom serve as cochairs, are appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

In addition to the duties assigned to it by statute, JLPAC was assigned two issues for study by the Legislative Research Commission. At its meeting on August 25, 1999, pursuant to G.S. 120-30.17(9), the Legislative Research Commission requested that JLPAC study the issues of child care subsidies and hunger and nutrition. The Legislative Research Commission was authorized to study child care subsidies and hunger and nutrition by Section 2.1(4) of Chapter 395 of the 1999 Session Laws. Part II of Chapter 395 allowed the Legislative Research Commission to consider House Bill 1229 and Senate Bill 944 in its study of hunger and nutrition. The relevant portions of Chapter 395, House Bill 1229 and Senate Bill 944 are included in Appendix A.

COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

The Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission met on February 14, 2000 and on March 30-31, 2000. Detailed accounts of those meetings are contained in the minutes of those meetings.

On February 14, JLPAC heard reports and briefings on the following issues:

- A list of reports due to the Commission was provided by Sharnese Ransome of the Division of Social Services and by Karen Hammonds-Blanks of the Fiscal Research Division.
- A report on the evaluation and oversight of electing counties under the TANF Block Grant was given by Pheon Beal of the Division of Social Services.
- A report on TANF pilot program grants was given by Pheon Beal of the Division of Social Services.
- A report on the progress of the "Five Star" rating system for child care was given by Stephanie Fanjul, Director of the Division of Child Development.
- A briefing on the School Lunch/Breakfast Program was given by Dr. Ben Matthews of the Department of Public Instruction.
- A briefing on the W.I.C. Program was given by Alice Lenihan of the Division of Public Health.
- A briefing on the Food Stamp program was given by Ben Watts of the Division of Social Services.
- A briefing on the Ag Food Distribution Program was given by Conrad McLean of the Department of Agriculture.
- A briefing on the Food Banks was given by Nan Holbrook-Griswold, Executive Director of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina.
- A briefing on the North Carolina Hunger Network was given by Shirley Williams-McClain, Executive Director of the North Carolina Hunger Network.

There was minimal discussion of these issues by JLPAC and the meeting was adjourned.

On March 30, JLPAC met and heard more reports on the following issues:

- A briefing on reinvesting TANF savings in families. This briefing was given by Hobart Freeman, Director of the Edgecomb County Department of Social Services; Sammy Haithcock, Director of the Caldwell County Department of Social Services; Dr. Ann Hamilton, Director of the Forsyth County Department of Social Services; and Jim Cook, Director of the Cabarrus County Department of Social Services.
- A report on TANF funding was given by Gary Fuquay, Acting Controller of the Department of Health and Human Services, and Nancy Costen, Assistant Director of the Division of Social Services
- A briefing on child care subsidies was given by Sue Russell, Director of the Child Care Services Association.
- An update on child support issues was given by Kevin Fitzgerald, Director of the Division of Social Services.
- A report on Work First evaluation was given by Pheon Beal of the Division of Social Services.

After some brief discussion of the issues, JLPAC was adjourned until March 31. On March 31, JLPAC met to discuss the reports it had received and finalized its findings and recommendations.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission makes the following findings and recommendations. Proposed legislation is attached to this report.

1. JLPAC finds that programs for the alleviation of hunger in the State of North Carolina are currently underutilized. JLPAC recommends that the General Assembly direct the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, representatives from the statewide system of food banks, the N.C. Hunger Network, and other state and local agencies, to study the reasons behind the under-utilization of the programs. The Departments should be directed to identify any actions that can be taken under current law to increase participation in those programs and to implement those actions before the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year. The Departments should be directed to report to JLPAC by October 1, 2000, on the actions taken and on any additional needs or recommendations of the Departments. Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, representatives from the statewide system of food banks, the N.C. Hunger Network, and other state and local agencies should study the reasons behind the under-utilization of the Food Stamps Program. The Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, representatives from the state-wide system of food banks, the N.C. Hunger Network and other state and local agencies, should be directed to identify any actions that can be taken under current state and federal laws and regulations to increase participation in this program and to implement those actions as soon as practicable. The Department of Health and Human Services should be directed to report to JLPAC by October 1, 2000, on the actions taken and on any additional needs or recommendations of the Department by October 1, 2000.
2. JLPAC finds that the State of North Carolina has a complicated system dealing with child support in that two separate governmental entities have responsibility for

child support enforcement while only one entity has responsibility for child support collection. JLPAC recommends that the General Assembly direct the Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrative Office of the Courts to investigate ways to coordinate efforts in regards to child support. Such coordination may include shared access to computer systems and establishment of protocols to refer the public to the proper entity for information and support. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrative Office of the Courts should report to JLPAC on this matter by October 1, 2000. JLPAC further recommends that the General Assembly direct the Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrative Office of the Courts to study any problems or barriers to moving to a unified system of child support collection and enforcement and to make recommendations to address any such problems. This study should contain an estimate of the cost of moving to a unified system over the next five years.

3. JLPAC finds that the current system of child care subsidies does not fully promote the provision of high-quality child care. JLPAC recommends that the General Assembly direct the Division of Child Development to establish definite timelines for conducting market rate studies and for publishing and implementing the results of those studies. Further, the Division of Child Development should be required to set the child care subsidy rate at 75% of the market rate for the applicable rated level of child care.

APPENDIX

CHAPTER 395

1999 Session Laws (1999 Session)

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE STUDIES BY THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION, TO CREATE VARIOUS STUDY COMMISSIONS, TO DIRECT STATE AGENCIES AND LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS TO STUDY SPECIFIED ISSUES, AND TO AMEND OTHER LAWS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

...

PART II.-----LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

Section 2.1. The Legislative Research Commission may study the topics listed below. When applicable, the bill or resolution that originally proposed the issue or study and the name of the sponsor is listed. Unless otherwise specified, the listed bill or resolution refers to the measure introduced in the 1999 Regular Session of the 1999 General Assembly. The Commission may consider the original bill or resolution in determining the nature, scope, and aspects of the study. The following groupings are for reference only:

...

(4) Human Resources and Health Issues:

...

h. Hunger and nutrition (H.B. 1229 - Adams; S.B. 944 - Martin of Guilford).

...

k. Child care subsidy issues including but not limited to: state implementation of federally mandated biennial market-rate surveys for the child care subsidy program and provider reimbursement formula, under the new five-star rated license, for the child care subsidy program (Mosley).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

H

1

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1229*

Sponsors: Representatives Adams; Alexander, Blue, Cole, Cox, Fitch, Goodwin, Hensley, Hunter, Jarrell, McAllister, Wainwright, and Womble.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar and Operations of the House.

April 15, 1999

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
2 COMMISSION TO STUDY HUNGER AND NUTRITION IN NORTH
3 CAROLINA.

4 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

5 Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission may study the status of
6 hunger and nutrition in North Carolina. The study may include, but is not limited to,
7 the following:

- 8 (1) The extent and nature of hunger in North Carolina and its
9 existence in various geographic regions of the State;
- 10 (2) The number of people eligible to receive food or funds for food
11 from various programs supported by State, local, or federal funds,
12 and private sources;
- 13 (3) Access to and use of such programs as: School Breakfast; National
14 School Lunch Programs; Food Stamps; Special Supplemental
15 Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Summer
16 Food; Child and Adult Care Feeding; Emergency Food Assistance;
17 Food Banks Supplemental Programs; and food recovery programs;
- 18 (4) The extent to which coordination of resources exists and
19 successfully maximizes use and effectiveness of programs listed in
20 subdivision (3) of this section and other hunger programs;
- 21 (5) Impact of Work First and TANF work requirements and time
22 limitations on assistance and their relationship to the number of
23 persons obtaining Work First and TANF benefits, on the utilization
24 of all food programs, especially Food Stamps, Summer Food, and
25 food pantries and soup kitchens;

- 1 (6) Impact of recent federal food stamp program reforms on particular
- 2 food stamp recipient groups or categories;
- 3 (7) Extent and impact of public school involvement with and support
- 4 for school-based and summer food programs;
- 5 (8) Barriers to access by persons eligible for food program benefits;
- 6 (9) The extent and effectiveness of outreach efforts to address hunger
- 7 and ways to make existing programs more effective.
- 8 Section 2. The Legislative Research Commission may make an interim
- 9 report to the 1999 General Assembly, 2000 Regular Session, and shall make a final
- 10 report to the 2001 General Assembly.
- 11 Section 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

S

1

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 944*

Sponsors: Senators Martin of Guilford; Albertson, Ballance, Clodfelter, Cooper, Dannelly, Gulley, Hoyle, Kerr, Perdue, Purcell, Rand, Warren, and Wellons.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

April 14, 1999

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
2 COMMISSION TO STUDY HUNGER AND NUTRITION IN NORTH
3 CAROLINA.

4 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

5 Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission may study the status of
6 hunger and nutrition in North Carolina. The study may include, but is not limited to,
7 the following:

- 8 (1) The extent and nature of hunger in North Carolina and its
9 existence in various geographic regions of the State;
- 10 (2) The number of people eligible to receive food or funds for food
11 from various programs supported by State, local, or federal funds,
12 and private sources;
- 13 (3) Access to and use of such programs as: School Breakfast; National
14 School Lunch Programs; Food Stamps; Special Supplemental
15 Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Summer
16 Food; Child and Adult Care Feeding; Emergency Food Assistance;
17 Food Banks Supplemental Programs; and food recovery programs;
- 18 (4) The extent to which coordination of resources exists and
19 successfully maximizes use and effectiveness of programs listed in
20 subdivision (3) of this section and other hunger programs;
- 21 (5) Impact of Work First and TANF work requirements and time
22 limitations on assistance and their relationship to the number of
23 persons obtaining Work First and TANF benefits, on the utilization

- 1 of all food programs, especially Food Stamps, Summer Food, and
- 2 food pantries and soup kitchens;
- 3 (6) Impact of recent federal food stamp program reforms on particular
- 4 food stamp recipient groups or categories;
- 5 (7) Extent and impact of public school involvement with and support
- 6 for school-based and summer food programs;
- 7 (8) Barriers to access by persons eligible for food program benefits;
- 8 (9) The extent and effectiveness of outreach efforts to address hunger
- 9 and ways to make existing programs more effective.
- 10 Section 2. The Legislative Research Commission may make an interim
- 11 report to the 1999 General Assembly, 2000 Regular Session, and shall make a final
- 12 report to the 2001 General Assembly.
- 13 Section 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

S/H

D

99-LYZ-067A(3.31)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)

Short Title: Study Child Support System.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND
3 THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS TO STUDY CERTAIN
4 ASPECTS OF THE CHILD SUPPORT SYSTEM.
5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
6 Section 1. The Department of Health and Human Services
7 and the Administrative Office of the Courts, in conjunction with
8 local departments of social services, clerks of court, IV-D
9 attorneys, district court judges, representatives of county
10 government, representatives of business and industry, and
11 representatives of child support clients, shall study ways to
12 more effectively coordinate the efforts of the two agencies in
13 regards to collection and enforcement of child support. This
14 study shall include studying the feasibility of the two agencies
15 granting each other access to one another's computer systems or
16 the feasibility of making the computer systems compatible with
17 one another. The study shall also include the development of
18 protocols to facilitate directing individuals to the proper
19 agency for assistance or information. The Department of Health
20 and Human Services and the Administrative Office of the Courts
21 shall report to the Joint Legislative Public Assistance
22 Commission on efforts under this section by October 1, 2000.
23 Section 2. The Department of Health and Human Services
24 and the Administrative Office of the Courts, in conjunction with

1 local departments of social services, clerks of court, IV-D
2 attorneys, district court judges, representatives of county
3 government, representatives of business and industry, and
4 representatives of child support clients, shall study the
5 problems with and barriers to the establishment of a unified
6 system of child support collection and enforcement. This study
7 shall also include estimates of the costs, including any savings,
8 associated with the establishment of a unified system and any
9 advantages or disadvantages associated with the establishment of
10 a unified system over a five year period. The two agencies shall
11 make recommendations regarding solutions to any problems or
12 barriers to the establishment of a unified system. The
13 Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrative
14 Office of the Courts shall make interim reports to the Joint
15 Legislative Public Assistance Commission on efforts under this
16 section by September 1, 2000 and December 1, 2000 and shall make
17 a final report to the Joint Legislative Public Assistance
18 Commission on efforts under this section by March 1, 2001.
19 Section 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

S/H

D

99-LYZ-068C(3.31)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)

Short Title: Child Care Subsidy Rates.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT TO CONDUCT A
3 MARKET RATE STUDY FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES EVERY TWO YEARS; TO
4 REQUIRE THAT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE PUBLISHED AND NEW
5 MARKET RATES IMPLEMENTED WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER THE STUDY IS
6 COMPLETED; TO REQUIRE THAT CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES BE SET AT THE
7 SEVENTY-FIFTH PERCENTILE OF THE COUNTY MARKET RATE; AND TO
8 CHANGE THE WAY CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES ARE SET FOR THE 2000-2001
9 FISCAL YEAR.
10 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
11 Section 1.(a) Chapter 110 of the General Statutes is
12 amended by adding a new section to read:
13 "§ 110-109. Child care subsidy rates.
14 (a) The Department shall conduct a statewide market rate study
15 of child care facilities at least once every two years. The
16 study shall include a survey of all licensed facilities. Based
17 on the results of this study, the Department shall establish a
18 market rate for child care centers and homes at each rated
19 quality level for each county and for each age group. The
20 Department shall also calculate a statewide market rate at each
21 rated quality level for each age group. The market rate shall be
22 set at the seventy-fifth percentile of fees charged to
23 unsubsidized, privately-paying parents at each rated quality
24 level for each age group.

1 (b) Within six months of completing a statewide market rate
2 study, the Department shall publish the results of that study and
3 implement market rates based on the results of that study.

4 (c) When a county has at least 75 children in an age group at a
5 particular rated quality level the subsidy rate is the county
6 market rate for that age group at that rated quality level. When
7 a county has less than 75 children in an age group at a
8 particular rated quality level the subsidy rate is the statewide
9 market rate for that age group at that rated quality level.

10 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (c) of this
11 section, when it can be demonstrated that the statewide market
12 rate is lower than the county market rate and that setting the
13 subsidy rate at the statewide market rate would inhibit a county
14 to purchase child care for low-income children, the subsidy rate
15 shall be the county market rate."

16 Section 1.(b) The first market rate study required by
17 G.S. 110-109 as enacted by subsection (a) of this Section shall
18 be completed no later than April 1, 2001.

19 Section 2.(a) Subsection (c) of Section 11.47 of S.L.
20 1999-237 reads as rewritten:

21 "Section 11.47.(c) Payments for the purchase of child care
22 services for low-income children shall be in accordance with the
23 following requirements:

24 (1) Effective October 1, 1999, religious-sponsored
25 child care facilities operating pursuant to G.S.
26 110-106 and licensed child care centers and homes
27 that meet the minimum licensing standards that are
28 participating in the subsidized child care program
29 shall be paid the ~~county market~~ subsidy rate or the
30 rate they charge privately paying parents,
31 whichever is lower.

32 (2) Effective October 1, 1999, religious-sponsored
33 child care facilities operating pursuant to G.S.
34 110-106 and licensed child care centers and homes
35 that are receiving a higher rate than the ~~market~~
36 subsidy rates that will be implemented with this
37 provision shall continue to receive that higher
38 rate for a period of three years from the effective
39 date of this section.

40 (3) Effective October 1, 1999, licensed child care
41 centers with two or more stars may receive a higher
42 payment rate per child per month as follows: two
43 stars - \$14.00, three stars - \$17.00, four stars -
44 \$20.00, and five stars - \$23.00. Effective January

1 1, 2000, licensed child care homes with two or more
2 stars may receive a higher payment rate per child
3 per month as follows: two stars - \$14.00, three
4 stars - \$17.00, four stars - \$20.00, and five stars
5 - \$23.00. This subdivision expires September 1,
6 2000.

7 (3a) Effective September 1, 2000, licensed child care
8 centers and homes with two or more stars shall
9 receive the subsidy rate for that rated quality
10 level for that age group or the rate they charge
11 privately paying parents, whichever is lower.

12 (4) Nonlicensed homes shall receive fifty percent (50%)
13 of the ~~county market~~ subsidy rate or the rate they
14 charge privately paying parents, whichever is
15 lower.

16 (5) Maximum payment rates shall also be calculated
17 periodically by the Division of Child Development
18 for transportation to and from child care provided
19 by the child care provider, individual transporter,
20 or transportation agency, and for fees charged by
21 providers to parents. These payment rates shall be
22 based upon information collected by market rate
23 surveys."

24 Section 2.(b) Subsection (d) of Section 11.47 of S.L.
25 1999-237 is repealed.

26 Section 2.(c) Subsection (e) of Section 11.47 of S.L.
27 1999-237 reads as rewritten:

28 "Section 11.47.(e) A market rate shall be calculated for child
29 care centers and homes ~~that meet minimum licensing standards at~~
30 each rated quality level for each county and for each age group
31 or age category of enrollees and shall be representative of fees
32 charged to unsubsidized privately paying parents for each age
33 group of enrollees within the county. The Division of Child
34 Development shall also calculate a statewide market rate at each
35 rated quality level for each age category. The Division of Child
36 Development may also calculate regional market rates at each
37 rated quality level for each age group and age category."

38 Section 3. G.S. 143-168.15(g) reads as rewritten:

39 "(g) Not less than thirty percent (30%) of each local
40 partnership's direct services allocation shall be used to expand
41 child care subsidies. To the extent practicable, these funds
42 shall be used to enhance the affordability, availability, and
43 quality of child care services as described in this section. ~~The~~
44 ~~local partnerships shall give priority for the use of these funds~~

1 ~~to augmenting the State's supplemental subsidy payment rate per~~
2 ~~child per month for licensed child care centers and homes earning~~
3 ~~a rated license that exceeds the minimum licensing standards."~~

4 Section 4. Section 3 becomes effective September 1,
5 2000. The remainder of this act becomes effective July 1, 2000.

6

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

S/H

D

99-LYZ-069B(3.31)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)

Short Title: Hunger Programs Studies.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND THE
3 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO STUDY THE SCHOOL
4 LUNCH, SCHOOL BREAKFAST, AND SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAMS AND
5 TO MODIFY IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE PROGRAMS AS ALLOWED UNDER
6 CURRENT LAW; AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
7 SERVICES TO STUDY THE FOOD STAMPS PROGRAM AND TO MODIFY
8 IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT PROGRAM AS ALLOWED UNDER CURRENT LAW.
9 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
10 Section 1. The Department of Health and Human Services
11 and the Department of Public Instruction, in conjunction with the
12 Department of Agriculture, the statewide system of food banks,
13 the North Carolina Hunger Network, the North Carolina Nutrition
14 Network, and other state and local agencies, shall study the
15 School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the
16 Summer Food Service Program. This study shall specifically
17 include a study of the reasons for underutilization of the
18 programs. The Department of Public Instruction and the
19 Department of Health and Human Services shall take any actions
20 authorized under current law to increase participation in these
21 programs before the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year. The
22 Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of
23 Public Instruction shall report on any actions taken under this
24 section and shall make any recommendations on changes to current

1 law to the Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission by
2 October 1, 2000.

3 Section 2. The Department of Health and Human Services,
4 in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, the statewide
5 system of food banks, the North Carolina Hunger Network, the
6 North Carolina Nutrition Network, and other state and local
7 agencies, shall conduct a comprehensive study of the Food Stamps
8 Program, specifically focusing on reasons for the
9 underutilization of the program. This study shall include
10 inquiry into the following areas:

- 11 (1) The feasibility of additional outreach efforts to
12 inform the public of the requirements and
13 availability of Food Stamps.
- 14 (2) The feasibility of extended business hours for
15 local departments of social services to facilitate
16 the process of obtaining Food Stamps.
- 17 (3) The feasibility of ending automatic termination of
18 Food Stamps when the individual or family no longer
19 receives Work First cash assistance; thereby
20 providing a transition period while the family
21 moves toward economic independence.

22 The Department shall identify any actions which may be taken
23 under current law to increase participation in the Food Stamps
24 Program and implement those actions as soon as practicable. The
25 Department shall report on efforts under this section to the
26 Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission by October 1,
27 2000.

28 Section 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

